

SITE CLEARANCE







+++++

INFORMATION AND FORMS

Regulations mandate that each abandoned well or platform within the coastal zone located on state water bottoms will be cleared of all obstructions within a designated radius. These regulations can be found at <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/cons/Title43.ssi> under the heading "Underwater Obstructions".

For answers to commonly asked questions, refer to the "GENERAL INFORMATION" form. Rules, procedures, applications and reports are discussed. Each form can be viewed in Acrobat PDF or Microsoft Word.

Use of the "APPLICATION" and "VERIFICATION REPORT" forms are required.

<u>FORM</u>	<u>PDF</u>	<u>WORD.DOC</u>
GENERAL INFORMATION		
APPLICATION		
VERIFICATION REPORT		

+++++

SITE CLEARANCE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Questions may be addressed to:

Bruce Ballard
225/342-6293
Bruce.Ballard@la.gov

OR

Steven Giambrone
225/219-9860
Steven.Giambrone@la.gov

Correspondence and Questions may be faxed to: 225/342-2584

All Applications and Reports shall be sent to:

Office of Conservation
Engineering Division
P.O. Box 94275
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Application Information

Required for all wells and platforms abandoned on state water bottoms in the coastal zone.

Application Fee is \$600.00. Make checks payable to the Louisiana Dept of Natural Resources, Office of Conservation.

Two copies of the application are required, except for a “Dry Hole” well. Only one copy is required for a dry hole. In all cases, only one copy of the Verification Report is required.

Each application may contain ten (10) wells or platforms or a combination of both.

All wells and/or platforms must be in the same field. A “Wildcat” well may be added to the group providing it is in the same parish and the number does not exceed ten.

If an application is made for a well which is not yet Plugged and Abandoned, the operator will have one year to P&A the well and submit a P&A report. Otherwise, the well will be removed from the application.

Deadlines

Within ninety (90) days after a well is P&A, an **Application** must be filed, the structure must be removed and the site verified clear.

Within ninety (90) days after verification is completed, a **Verification Report** must be submitted.

Failure to comply with deadlines may result in fines and/or penalties.

Required Clearance Areas

All abandoned well and platform locations must be cleared of all obstructions present as a result of oil and gas activities.

Definitions:

Restricted Waterways: A location in which land above the waters surface would be encountered inside a 400' radius such as canals or rivers.

Bank: Land existing above the waters surface.

Platform: A structure that has significant facilities supporting exploration and production operations.

Territorial Seas: Waters from the most southerly land mass at that longitude outward to the three mile limit.

RADIUS REQUIREMENTS:

DRY HOLE WELLS: A 300' radius centered on the well in open waters
 A 100' radius or up to an existing bank in restricted waterways

SINGLE WELLS OR PLATFORM WITH NO SIGNIFICANT FACILITIES:

A 400' radius in all open waters

A 100' radius or up to an existing bank in restricted waterways

PLATFORMS WITH SIGNIFICANT FACILITIES:

A 1320' radius in territorial seas

A 400' radius in coastal waters

A 400' radius or up to an existing bank in restricted waterways

EXCEPTIONS:

Variations may be granted for areas under some circumstances such as:

A high density of wells creating a condition that would require considerable over-lapping of site clearance for wells within that radius.

A request to exclude a portion of the approved radius from surveying must be made in the application.

Site Clearance Verification Procedures

Trawling

Diver

Other: Alternate methods will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Trawling

Trawling requirements are discussed in the regulations at <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/cons/Title43.ssi>

Trawling must comply with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. To read the existing MOU [click here](#) . Changes are being made now to include (1) Trawls shall have a minimum stretched mesh size of 4 inches at the cod end and 2 inches elsewhere. (2) Contractors shall report to NOAA Fisheries in compliance with 50 CFR 223.206 all takes and identify the species of any sea turtles incidentally captured, resuscitated, released, or killed. Report shall include animal's condition. Since a sea turtle can be recovered post-mortem, the description should include the animal's condition (i.e. rigor mortis, decaying, cracked carapace/shell, etc.) (3) All captured sea turtles shall be resuscitated and released as per the guidelines described in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) according to federal regulations at [50 CFR 223.206\(d\)\(1\)](#).

Diving

Diving is not discussed in the regulations but is permitted under some conditions.

Diving will normally be allowed for the following conditions:

- (1) Water depth is 3 feet or less
- (2) There are numerous flow/pipe lines in the radius making trawling unsafe
- (3) Area is part of a private oyster lease

The location of the abandoned well will be made by actual marking at the time of abandonment or later using a differential GPS or equivalent. A hand held GPS is not acceptable.

Divers will make sweeps with chain or cable of sufficient weight to remain on bottom. Sweeps will be in ten foot or less increments. Any obstruction felt or snagged will be marked for removal.

The diver method to be deployed will be discussed in the application.

Other

An alternate verification procedure might include Mezotech or Side Scan Sonar. At this time, these procedures are not approved but might be allowed under certain conditions and circumstances. If one of these methods are approved, at a minimum, required deliverables will include a digital record of the area of sufficient size so that all anomalies can be detected and a composite mosaic. A diver must search each anomaly recorded and report his findings.

Structure Removal

A discussion of the removed structure will be included in the application. Describe the number and type of pilings and the facilities on the structure prior to removal. Everything must be removed to a depth of at least 10 feet.

The Office of Conservation does not approve or disapprove the use of explosives. If explosives are used, other agencies will review the application and a schematic drawing or photo is required of the structure. Include a description of the explosives and methods to be used.

*******Flow Lines*******

The preferred action is to remove all inactive lines within the approved radius. Removal is strongly recommended to prevent future underwater obstructions to commercial fishing and navigation.

IMPORTANT

All abandoned well and platform locations on state water bottoms shall be cleared of all related obstructions by the owner of such facilities. Any flow line or pipe of any kind that protrudes above the mud line constitutes an obstruction and shall be removed or buried three (3) feet at the discretion of the owner.

Exceptions: Any active flow line is not required to be buried or removed. Any inactive line intertwined with an active line is not required to be buried or removed in that area. Once they become separated, then the inactive line will be buried or removed.

Any safety concern shall be addressed on site by the operator/contractor on an individual basis and not on a blanket basis. The operator/contractor is not required to bury or remove a portion of a line he believes would be unsafe, but he must be able to adequately explain why it was unsafe. If he is unable to do so, he may be required to return and complete work.

Each application shall include a description of all existing flow/pipe lines within the approved radius of the abandoned well or platform prior to structure removal. Describe to the best of your capability.

Each verification report, after the procedure is completed, will include data on flow lines and pipelines that still remain above the mud line, those buried and on those removed. This includes those lines from other wells.

Every flow line encountered during a survey will be checked and verified, to the extent possible, of its status (active or inactive). Check for holes in the line and for open ends and use any other method available. If an inactive line is separated from the active line by at least ten feet, then the contractor should begin removal or burial of the inactive line at or near that point.

If the applicant believes that the removal or burial of pipelines and/or flow lines from the approved radius would in some way harm the environment or present a danger to wildlife, so state. Include a signed concurrence of the harm or danger from the DNR Office of Coastal Management, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries or the DOA's Office of State Land. Only one is sufficient for the entire field and all future site clearance applications in that field. With the concurrence, the Office of Conservation will not require removal or burial. If the Office of Conservation believes the reason to be insufficient, the operator may still be required to remove or bury.

APPENDIX B: RESUSCITATION PROCEDURES

If you catch a sea turtle that is active, it should be returned to the water over the aft portion of the vessel, preferably in a non-fishing area, when gear is not in use.

If a turtle appears to be comatose (unconscious), then you should attempt to revive it before putting it back into the water. Use the following method of resuscitation:

Place the turtle on its plastron (lower shell) and elevate the hindquarters several inches to permit the lungs to drain off water.

A comatose but live sea turtle may, in some cases, exhibit absolutely no movement or signs of life (no muscle reflexes). In other cases, an unconscious turtle may show some evidence of eyelid or tail movement when touched. Sea turtles may take some time to revive. Do not give up too quickly. Regulations allow a fisherman without a permit to keep a turtle on deck up to 24 hours. Even turtles successfully resuscitated benefit from being held on deck as long as possible, to allow toxins which built up as a result of stress to dissipate from the body. Try to keep the skin, and especially the eyes moist while the turtle is on deck. A turtle that has shown no sign of life after 24 hours on deck (held in the shade where further damage to it won't occur) may safely be considered dead.

If the turtle cannot be revived before returning to port and it cannot be salvaged, it should be returned to the water, preferably in a non-fishing area. Mark the turtle (spray paint it or tag it) before returning it to the water.

MOU BETWEEN WILDLIFE & FISHERIES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

1. No site clearance verification by trawling will be performed from May 1 until the opening of the spring inshore shrimp season each year.
2. No site clearance verification by trawling will be performed from August 1 until the opening of the fall inshore shrimp season each year.
3. No site clearance verification by trawling activities will be performed at night. Such activities will be limited to daylight hours.
4. Each contractor-trawler desiring to perform site clearance verification shall display on the top and sides of the vessel his vessel registration number preceded by the letters "SC". These letters and numbers shall be a minimum of twelve (12") inches in height and shall be in contrasting color to the vessel so that they may be easily read from the air or water.
5. Each contractor-trawler shall keep on board its vessel a copy of the site clearance permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources to the lessee (operator).
6. No trawling will be permitted on oyster leases without prior approval from the lease holder.
7. No trawling over vegetated wetlands will be allowed.
8. Contractor performing actual site clearance verification by trawling must inform the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division's nearest Regional Office 48 hours prior to commencing such activities. This notification must be in the form of a **FAX** which will be signed by the Region Captain or his designee and returned to the contractor. Information contained in the **FAX** shall include vessel name, official number/LA number, color, size; permittee/contractor name, address; site location number, block, latitude, longitude, X, Y; beginning date, ending date. (See enclosed example.)
9. There will be no limitation on the size or number of trawls used for the purpose of site clearance. However, all trawls must conform to the minimum mesh size as required by law.
10. Violation of any of these provisions, the provisions contained in the permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources or any violation of wildlife and fisheries laws, rules, or regulations not specifically waived by this Memorandum of Understanding shall be grounds for immediate revocation of the contractor's authority to conduct site clearance verification. Both the permittee and his contractor shall bear legal responsibility for any violations of the aforementioned requirements, both criminal and civil.
11. The Department of Natural Resources shall assign a Site Clearance Docket No. to each application and provide the Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries with a weekly docket summary and appropriate attachments identifying the permitted clearances sites.

Site Clearance Verification Procedure Application

Date_____

Company Name_____

is applying to the Office of Conservation, pursuant to rules and regulations, for authorization of the applicant's Site Clearance Plan of an abandoned oil and gas structure located in the

_____ Field
_____ Parish, Louisiana

Mailing Address_____

Responsible Person with the Applicant's Organization

Name _____
Position _____
Phone Number _____

If Organization Responsible for Application is Different from Applicant

Name of Consulting Company _____
Mailing Address _____

Contact Person _____
Phone Number _____

Well or Platform Name

Serial Number

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Average Water Depth of Area_____

Location(s) in

Restricted Waterways_____ Open Coastal Waters_____
Territorial Seas_____

If wells, were they

Dry Hole_____ Or Once a Producer_____

Proposed Site Clearance Verification Method

Trawling_____ Diver_____ Other_____

Proposed Radius Size to be Surveyed_____



Complete this Section if Trawling

Describe with attachment the navigation equipment utilized to ensure correct position information.

Describe with attachment trawling procedures

Attach drawing with radius around well or platform, grid lines and show how nets will cover the area.

I have read and understand and will comply with all Site Clearance Requirements for trawling as contained in: <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/cons/Title43.ssi> and [General Instructions](#) and [MOU](#) (Memorandum of Understanding)

Signature

Sea Turtle Handling

If a sea turtle is taken while trawling, he will be resuscitated according to guidelines for any captured turtle as described in the ESA (Endangered Species Act) regulations at [50CFR223.206\(d\)\(1\)](#) and released. The species of any taken Sea Turtle will be identified and its condition reported within the verification report.

Signature

Any debris that should fall from a torn net will be recovered and disposed in a proper and legal manner on land. This includes any debris that might fall outside the assigned radius.

Signature

Complete this Section if using Diver Walk

Explain why diving is proposed instead of trawling_____

Explain how the center of the abandoned well or platform will be located

Explain in detail the method that will be used to cover the required area. _____

Attach a drawing which shows the radius to be covered and method employed by the diver.

Any obstruction encountered will be marked, removed, and disposed on land.

Signature

Complete this Section if Method is Other

With attachment, describe in detail the proposed procedure. Include all equipment specifications and spacing of grid lines or tripods. Explain in detail what deliverables will be presented to prove the radius is clear. Explain how divers will examine each anomaly; make reports of findings and how obstructions encountered will be removed. Include a drawing to support description.

Upon completion of Site Clearance Verification, the radius will be clear of all obstructions.

Signature

Provide a Vicinity Map of the Location

Draw the appropriate radius around each well or platform.

If location is in a restricted waterway, clearly show nearby land.

If asking for exclusion of a portion of the radius, the map will show all nearby wells and the scale will be such as to show clearly why the exemption is necessary.

Provide Plug and Abandoned forms for all Wells

If well is P&A at the current time, provide a copy of the work permit or a copy of the P&A Report that is normally completed after the P&A work is done.

If the well is not P&A at the current time, provide a copy of the work permit.

Provide a Notarized Verification of Application

Sample on next page

VERIFICATION OF APPLICATION

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned Notary Public, duly commissioned, personally came and appeared _____, who, being by me duly
(name of person)

sworn, did upon his oath verify that he is (Attorney, Representative, Agent, etc.) for _____, that the information contained in the
(name of company)

above and foregoing application is true and correct, to the best of his knowledge, and that he has authority to make such application.

(signature of person)

(name of person)

SWORN TO and SUBSCRIBED before me, Notary, this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(signature of notary)

NOTARY PUBLIC in and for

Parish, Louisiana

(Note: Include Notary stamp and seal with Commission expiration)

Structure Removal Data

DESCRIBE THE STRUCTURE TO BE REMOVED PRIOR TO SITE CLEARANCE
VERIFICATION (Include configuration, size, number and type of legs, casings, pilings)

Depth to which Casing, Pilings will be removed _____

Attach a schematic or photograph of the existing structure.

Will **explosives** be used? _____

If **Yes**, provide a discussion of how explosives will be used.

FLOW LINES / PIPELINES

*****Describe all flow lines and/or pipelines prior to structure removal within the radius.*****

All abandoned well and platform locations on state water bottoms shall be cleared of all related obstructions by the owner of such facilities. Any flow line or pipe of any kind that protrudes above the mud line, constitutes an obstruction and shall either be removed or buried three (3) feet at the discretion of the owner.

(Exceptions: Any active flow line or pipeline is not required to be buried or removed. Any inactive flow line intertwined with an active line is not required to be buried or removed in that area. Once they become separated, then the inactive line will be buried or removed.

Any safety concern shall be addressed on site by the operator/contractor on an individual basis and not on a blanket basis. The operator/contractor is not required to bury or remove a portion of line he believes would be unsafe, but he must be able to adequately explain why it was unsafe. If he is unable to do so, he may be required to return and complete work.)

I have read and understand and will comply with the requirements for flow lines and pipe lines.

Signature

Will inactive flow lines and/or pipelines be removed _____ or buried _____

Is there a request that any portion of the radius be exempt from survey coverage? _____

If yes,

explain _____

In your opinion, is there a danger to the environment or a threat to wildlife if flow lines are removed? _____

If yes, explain _____

Is a letter of concurrence from an appropriate agency attached? _____

(A letter of concurrence is required if you wish to leave all lines in place without burial. If a concurrence was previously submitted with another application, attach a copy.)

All debris will be disposed in a proper and legal manner. The required radius will be free of obstructions after work is complete. All debris will be brought to land for proper disposal. If a net should be torn and debris dropped outside the radius, it will be recovered and disposed on land in a proper manner.

Signature

SITE CLEARANCE VERIFICATION PROCEDURE REPORT

Company Name_____

Site Clearance Application Number_____

Field Name_____

Parish_____

Names of wells/platforms

Serial Numbers

- (1)_____
- (2)_____
- (3)_____
- (4)_____
- (5)_____
- (6)_____
- (7)_____
- (8)_____
- (9)_____
- (10)_____

Survey Method

Trawling_____ Diver_____ Other_____

Survey Radius_____

Date(s) work was performed_____

The entire area contained within the approved radius (except for any approved exceptions) was covered by the survey. All conditions of the Site Clearance Verification Procedure Application were complied with. This area is now clear of any obstructions or debris (except as noted below).

Signature

If Trawling was used:

- (1) Attach a plot of boats path through the radius
- (2) Show grid lines and well/platform center
- (3) For each grid line state
 - * Line was clear
 - Or
 - * Obstruction was recovered
Describe
 - Or
 - * Net was torn
 - Obstruction was recovered on boat
Describe
 - Obstruction fell back in water
State that it was marked and recovered
Describe

Sea Turtle Report

Number of turtles taken in nets_____ (If none say none)

Sizes_____

Species_(Kemp Ridley, Olive Ridley, Leatherneck...)_____

Taken dead____ or alive_____

If alive: Resuscitated____ Yes____ No

Condition_____

Released alive____ or died before_____

If not alive: Condition(rigor mortis, decaying, cracked
Carapace/shell)_____

If Diver Walk was used:

Describe with attachment how the diver walk was performed.

Attach a drawing showing how sweeps were made, any land mass encountered and a scale.

List and describe all obstructions encountered. State that they were marked and removed.

If Other Methods were used: Provide all documentation as described in the application

*******Flow Line and Pipeline Discussion*******

List all flow lines and pipelines that remain in the radius after verification work is complete. State whether they are active or inactive, buried or not buried. If any remaining line is not buried explain why and report any safety concerns addressed. (If none, say none) Also list any flow lines or pipe lines removed during structure removal or verification.

Attach a “Verification of Information” page

(Sample Next Page)

VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned Notary Public, duly commissioned, personally came and appeared _____, who, being by me duly
(name of person)
sworn, did upon his oath verify that he is (Attorney, Representative, Agent, etc.) for
_____, that the information contained in the
(name of company)
above and foregoing verification report is true and correct, to the best of his knowledge, and that he has authority to make such application.

(signature of person)

(name of person)

SWORN TO and SUBSCRIBED before me, Notary, this

____ day of _____, 20____.

(signature of notary)

NOTARY PUBLIC in and for

Parish, Louisiana

(Note: Include Notary stamp and seal with Commission expiration)